

The Lighthouse

September 2023

MINISTRY UPDATE

The Session and Diaconate met this month and here is what is happening.

Pastor Shannon Philio gave us a report on his work at our church and the Moss Point church where he serves as stated supply. "Stated supply" is our denomination's way of saying that he preaches for them, but he is not serving as their official pastor. Of course, Shannon goes above and beyond and pastors that congregation; and he has had some encouragements this year. They have added a couple of new ruling elders and have received new members. Praise the Lord!

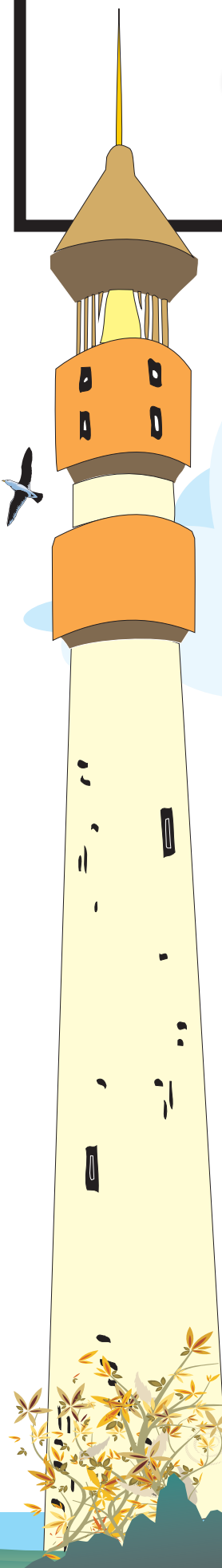
The session decided to suspend celebrating the Lord's Supper at the evening service for the time being. We will continue our long-standing practice of celebrating the Lord's Supper on the first Sunday of the month in the morning service.

Kayleigh Clark has been working on a proposal for a new church website with upgrades to our social media presence which she presented to the session. The new website is in the works and will be up and running in the near future if all goes according to plan. This website will also be phone/notebook friendly and there is even the option to have our own app. She has created an Instagram account as well which will further increase our media presence.

We have a number of people visiting our church at the moment and Pastor Tim is seeking to organize an "Inquirer's Class". If someone wants to learn about First Pres Biloxi and/or join our church; this class would answer all your questions. Of course, it wouldn't be open only to visitors. Anyone would be welcome to attend. He is currently trying to figure out a schedule for this class. If you are interested, please let him know.

Presbytery is meeting September 12th at FPC Gulfport. The meeting starts with worship at 9:00am and anyone is welcome to attend. This is a special meeting because we will be spending some time celebrating the 50th anniversary of Grace Presbytery with a slide show and panel discussion from some of our original members.

There is an outreach opportunity to report that comes to us from our Women's Ministries team. Our church is encouraging the teachers at our local school, Biloxi Upper Elementary, by providing a birthday cake each month for every teacher who is celebrating a birthday. We have a sign there that tells them that FPC Biloxi is providing the cake and we are thinking about them. The first month was a great success and the teachers were very pleased and thankful. The cake costs about \$50 and we are asking for volunteers to provide funding for a month throughout the school year. I would encourage two or three people to volunteer together so the cost will be lower per person. Contact Kim in the office to volunteer or for more information. We are looking into some other opportunities to impact the community that we will tell you about in the near future.



The Diaconate has been hard at work taking care of the church property. There has been repair work to the columns at the front of the church, and some minor repairs to the Father Ryan manse. The priority at the moment is working on repairs to the St. Paul manse. Work has already begun on installing a new water line. This work is in addition to the regular cleaning and maintenance of the church property, and a few workdays over in Moss Point to help with cleanup after the tornadoes. There is a long list of items on their to do list, so any help would be appreciated. Simply contact a deacon and they will direct you!

We will have our annual Cruisin' the Coast picnic on Friday, October 6th, so mark your calendars. Plans are not finalized, but we are hoping to have a fish fry.



Real happiness is more of a habit than a goal,
more of an attitude than an attainment. It is
the companion of cheerfulness, not the circumstance.
Happiness is what overtakes us when we forget
ourselves, when we learn to open our eyes in
optimism and close the door in the face of defeat.
We win happiness when we lose ourselves in
service to others.

Love is the spark that kindles the fire of compassion.
Compassion is the fire that flames the candle of service.
Service is the candle that lights the beacon of faith.
Faith is the beacon that reflects the power of God. God
is the power that creates the miracle of love.

Where there is love, there is concern.
Where there is concern, there is kindness.
Where there is kindness, there is harmony.
Where there is harmony, there is helpfulness.
Where there is helpfulness, there is Christ.
Where there is Christ, there is love.

The words of
William Arthur Ward

From Evan and Bonnie...



Dear Friends and Family,

We have safely returned to Burkina Faso, and I was very impressed with how well the church was run in our departure. We were thankful and encouraged to return to see such growth. Recently, we have been excited to have two young men in our church express interest in becoming pastors and involving themselves more in the ministry. In September we plan to start an internship at our churches for the next two years. Please pray that the Lord will continue to work and grow their desire to minister here in Burkina Faso.

We were happy to return at the start of the rainy season which enabled us to miss the miserable heat of the hot season. In fact, we have often had cooler temperatures than many places in America this time of year. Charlotte and Lucas now have started back up with school after an extended break during our time in America. Lucas is now in the process of learning to read. They enjoyed the rain and playing in it (and so have I to be honest). Back in America our family is doing well. My Dad has continued to do unexpectedly well with his cancer. Every scan they have taken has shown it to decrease. The chemo has been hard on him every two weeks, but it is working, and he is doing much better, overall. We continue to ask for your prayers in that area and ask you to join us in thanking the Lord for His continued protection of my dad.

Our agricultural program has grown significantly here in Burkina since our

first training a year ago. As I mentioned, two of the national pastors, Jean Baptiste and Antoine carried out courses at four churches for nearly 300 students. I have gone out to a few of the churches and seen the field planted with the Foundation for Farming method. I was surprised by how many people did not just take the course but began mulching their fields and planting till-free.

The growth of the agricultural ministry has led to an increase in reasonability for me. The Foundation for Farming method has not just met with success here in Burkina Faso but throughout the continent of Africa and beyond, which has led Frank S from MTW and Michael Cooley from ELI to start an exciting new organization Equipping Farmers International. They have asked me to coordinate the training in West Africa. Our goal over the next year is to communicate with the churches in West Africa and offer training in sustainable agricultural development. Please refer to the video below to learn more about Equipping Farmers International and our goal for West Africa and the global south. You can also go to the website by clicking here to learn more: [Equipping Farmers International](#)

Continue to pray for the security of the region, Since the coup in Niger, the three landlocked countries in the Sahel, Burkina Faso, Mali, and Niger are all run by the military and have separated themselves from the rest of West Africa. Ivory Coast and Benin have threatened to invade and restore democracy, which seems very unlikely, but has increased tensions and uncertainty for the future. Overall, Our everyday lives and ministry are relatively unaffected by the political turmoil, but we and MTW keep an eye on the situation. Please pray for peace and security for this whole region and for God's people.

We pray you are all well and that the summer comes to a peaceful close for you. Thank you for your prayers and support. Your encouragement is a huge blessing to our entire family.



Here is Equipping Farmers International's vision video



Here one of the local famers adopted our system for half of his field. Lord willing the difference of the two systems will be very clear by harvest.



How Can You Give Financial Support

1. You can give online at www.MTW.org. To find us, put our account number 13727. You will not see our names mentioned because we are going to sensitive country, but any donations to that account number will go toward our ministry. To have the support automatically taken and applied to our support account you will need to make an account with MTW.
2. **Send out a check to Mission to the World (in the memo line add: account 13727) and send the check to:**

Mission to the World
P.O. Box 744165
Atlanta, GA 30374

BIRTHDAYS for SEPTEMBER

Fran Handel 1st Chris Smith 5th
Phil Pennington 11th Margaret Fore 17th
Tammy Turney 20th Ashley VanderKooy 20th

Dates to Remember for September

- September 2 Men's Breakfast at 8:00 am in the Fellowship Hall
- September 3 Communion at the morning worship service
- September 4 Church office will be closed for Labor Day Holiday
- September 6 Ladies Leadership Meeting at 5:30 pm in the church library
- September 10 Monthly luncheon after the worship service, please bring a dish to share
- September 17 Communion at the evening worship service *(it is suspended for a while)*
- September 18 Deacons Meeting at 5:30 pm
- September 18 Men's Study begins at 6:30 pm in the church library, there will be more info in the church bulletin
- September 23 Ladies Fall Get Together at 2-4 pm at the home of Pat Pennell. More info TBA in the church
- September 26 Session Meeting at 6:00 pm

Fellowship Groups are an opportunity to spend time with people in the church in a less formal setting. The goal is to get to know one another better so we can encourage and minister to one another. The focus is more on personal relationships than Bible Study; though there may be a devotional or discussion during the get together. We currently have three fellowship groups that are organized geographically- West Biloxi, Central Biloxi and Jackson County, for more information contact Kim at the church office.



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firstpresbiloxi.org

First Presbyterian Church of Biloxi is a congregation of the Presbyterian Church in America. To learn more about the PCA, log on to pcanet.org

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Deacons

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Church Musicians

Jeff Harrison	Music Director	jeff.harrison@firstpresbiloxi.org
Melba Sipriano	Pianist/Organist	melba.sipriano@firstpresbiloxi.org

Church Secretary

Kim Clark	228-374-6880	info@firstpresbiloxi.org
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